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ABSTRACT

This monograph is intended to help in the creation of effective programs for adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD). Discussion covers techniques for dealing with students placed in special education programs within public school settings and those placed in specialized settings (e.g., day treatment centers). After an introductory chapter, the guide addresses: (1) issues of student placement and least restrictive environment; (2) conditions of learning, curriculum, and consequences that work for adolescents with E/BD; (3) best practices and legal guidelines concerning the use of timeout; (4) best practices for developing level systems to manage students with E/BD, including individualized level systems that meet the mandates of the law; (5) the Garrison Model, a therapeutic program emphasizing a student's responsibility for his/her choices, a whole school approach, direct social skills training, positive involvement in the community, application of logical and natural consequences for inappropriate behavior, violence intervention, and parent involvement. (Contains 56 references.) (DB)

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From the Mini-Library Series on
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Best Practices for Managing Adolescents With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Within the School Environment

Beverley H. Johns
Four Rivers Special Education District

Eleanor C. Guetzloe
University of South Florida at St. Petersburg

Mitchell Yell
University of South Carolina

Brenda Scheuermann
Southwest Texas State University

Jo Webber
Southwest Texas State University

Valerie G. Carr
Garrison Alternative School

Carl R. Smith
Drake University

Published by
The Council for Children
with Behavioral Disorders

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

1996

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children/youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

About This Monograph

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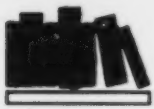


About the Mini-Library Series on Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Foreword

Today, professionals are struggling to discover ways to deal successfully with a heterogeneous population of students, some of whom are especially difficult to manage and instruct. No other group of youngsters poses a greater challenge than those variously labelled "seriously emotionally disturbed," "behaviorally disordered," or "emotionally/behaviorally disordered." These children and youth manifest a combination of social, academic, and behavior problems that require not only powerful individual strategies but also effective program options. Fortunately, there is a growing body of knowledge regarding what constitutes quality practices for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD).

This mini-library series targets the most crucial issues and concerns regarding these children and youth. It covers the needs of students of various ages who are being served in different programs and settings and who demand diverse policy considerations. The mini-library derives from the 1995 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders. The seven monographs and their authors are

- *Best Practices for Managing the Behavior of Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Within the School Environment*
  Beverley H. Johns, Eleanor C. Guetzloe, Mitchell Yell, Brenda Scheuermann, Jo Webber, Valerie G. Carr, and Carl R. Smith

- *Developing a System of Care: Interagency Collaboration for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Russell J. Skiba, Lewis Polsgrove, and Karen Nasstrom

- *Early Intervention for Young Children At Risk for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Implications for Policy and Practice*
  Wesley Brown, Maureen A. Conroy, James J. Fox, Joseph Wehby, Carol Davis, and Mary McEvoy

- *Effective Strategies for Teaching Appropriate Behaviors to Children With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Robert B. Rutherford, Jr., Mary M. Quinn, and Sarup R. Mathur

- *Planning and Implementing Effective Programs for School-Aged Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Within Inclusive Schools*
  Howard S. Muscott, Daniel P. Morgan, and Nancy B. Meadows
- *Teacher-Mediated Behavior Management Strategies for Children With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Sarup R. Mathur, Mary M. Quinn, Robert B. Rutherford, Jr.
- *Types of Youth Aggression and Violence and Implications for Prevention and Treatment*
  Richard Van Acker

As editors, we strove to bring together information with practical value to the teachers, administrators, and other professionals who must respond to the challenges posed by children and youth with E/BD. We hope this mini-library series will contribute to your success and the success of the students with whom you work.

Lyndal M. Bullock
University of North Texas

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University

Series Editors

Contents

Foreword iii

1. Introduction 1

2. Addressing the Least Restrictive Environment 2

3. Strategies That Work for Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Conditions, Curriculum, and Consequences 6
- Conditions 7
- Curriculum 10
- Consequences 13

4. Timeout: Best Practices and Legal Guidelines 14
- Best Practices 14
- Legal Guidelines 17

5. Best Practices for Developing Level Systems 21
- Restricted Access 22
- Curricular Concerns 22
- Procedural Concerns 23
- A Decision-Making Model for Individualized Level Systems 24
- A Final Consideration 30

6. The Garrison Model: An Effective Program for Managing the Behaviors of Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders 31
- The Whole-School Approach 32
- Social Skills Training 32
- Community Service Learning 32
- Elimination of Suspension and Implementation of Responsibilty-Based Discipline 33
- Interagency Coordination 34
- Gang Identification and Prevention 34
- Climate and Environment Issues 34
- Violence Prevention 35
- Developing Positive Public Relations 35
- Accenting the Positive 36
- Parent Involvement 36

7. Conclusion 37

8. References 38

Introduction

Adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) may be the most challenging population of students in today's schools. By the time students reach this age level, much of their behavior is well-ingrained. In fact, many of these students have been reinforced for inappropriate behavior for a number of years. For example, some behaviors were perceived as "cute" when the students were young; now they are no longer cute but obnoxious. Or inappropriate behavior may have gotten them removed from school (suspended) which is what they wanted anyway. Or, finally, low-level aggressive acts were ignored and have now turned into high-level aggression.

Goldstein, Harootunian, and Conoley (1994) note that violence has become especially acute among today's young people. Between 1981 and 1990, all categories of violent crime increased substantially for youths under age 18. As violence among young people grows, so too does the general population of teenagers. James Alan Fox, Dean of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, has reported that declines in the adolescent population over the past few years are bottoming out and the population itself of adolescents is increasing.

This monograph provides readers with the components for creating effective programs for adolescents with E/BD. Discussion covers techniques for dealing with students placed in special education programs within public school settings and those placed in specialized settings (e.g., day treatment centers).

If educators are to be successful in dealing with students with E/BD, programs must be of the highest quality, be motivating to students through a meaningful curriculum, and must rely on effective techniques for behavior management.

Addressing the Least Restrictive Environment

The primary means to achieve individualization within special education is through the Individualized Educational Program (IEP). As educational teams ponder the question of where educational services are to be provided, they need to remember that defining which services are needed, as described in the IEP, must be determined *before* considering the setting in which such services are provided. Federal legislation mandates that schools maintain a full continuum of service delivery options (which is still defined as locations of services) from which to select *where* an appropriate education can be provided for an individual student.

In commenting on the 1990 amendments to P. L. 94-142 (IDEA), Turnbull (1993) states, "In short, Congress declined to narrow the continuum and thus reaffirmed that separate, segregated education is permissible" (p. 165).

The quest for least restrictive settings must always be balanced with the notion of securing an appropriate program for any student.

> The provision of appropriate educational programming may not always be available in the least restrictive setting, and the least restrictive setting may not always be the appropriate place for providing an education program. The courts generally have found that Congress intended "appropriateness" to prevail. (Bartlett, 1992, p. 17)

These principles as applied to "least restrictive environment" (LRE) considerations need to be specifically examined in relation to adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD). Professionals involved in placement decisions will be challenged to present supportive data such as that described by Braaten, Kauffman, Braaten, Polsgrove, and Nelson (1988) who state

> Many BD students require interventions that are complex. Some can be used successfully in regular classrooms by general educators, but reliable data do not support the contention that special education services can be reduced if these interventions (e.g., cooperative learning, prereferral teams, consulting teachers, peer tutoring) are used in general education settings. (p. 25)

In examining the need for specialized services, the LRE question cannot be answered simply by looking at whether the academic needs of a particular student can be met in the regular classroom. Education services for students with E/BD go beyond academics. At the time of this writing, the federal government is considering a new definition for the E/BD population that alludes to educational performance as including "self care, social relationships, personal adjustments, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work adjustment."

Adolescents with E/BD also bring to mind the issue of student protection. As stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and referenced in federal regulations governing special education

> Where a handicapped child is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of their students is significantly impaired, the needs of the handicapped child cannot be met in that environment. Therefore regular placement would not be appropriate for his or her needs. (34 C.F.R. part 104-Appendix, paragraph 24)

Braaten et al. (1988) have applied this standard to students with E/BD and conclude

> BD students placed in regular classes present particular problems because their characteristics demand additional instructional resources, including specially trained staff to manage extremely disruptive and dangerous behavior. Other students' rights to a safe and supportive learning environment are neither minor nor moot when the assumption that no student should be segregated forces the integration of BD students. (p. 23)

Educators also need to consider the extent to which they may, under the umbrella of LRE, be subjecting students to disciplinary exclusion outcomes such as suspension, expulsion, or homebound instruction because of the student's inability to meet the behavioral expectations of a particular setting. This issue can serve as a reminder that the LRE ques-

tion cannot be answered by simply looking at whether the academic needs of a student can be met in the regular classroom.

As Champagne (1993) notes, educators have been asked to weigh LRE considerations against appropriate program issues. In contrast to this "balancing" approach, Champagne proposes that a sequential approach be used by decision makers. The steps include

1. The question of *what will* be provided for the student comes before questions of *where* it will be provided.
2. Each educational setting is examined not only "as is" but also as it might be modified.
3. Each placement is examined one at a time *in a particular sequence* (from least to most restrictive).
4. Even after the primary placement is tentatively determined, additional opportunities for part-time integration are considered.

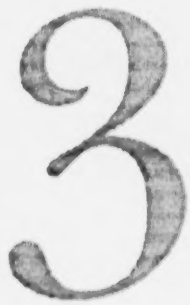
Table 1 provides a list of important factors that supplement Champagne's suggestions. These factors are based on a review of selected policy statements from the U. S. Department of Education, court decisions, and professional literature.

What adolescents need is educators' commitment to improve the individualization and effectiveness of the programs provided. Inclusionary environments and LRE decisions ultimately will be judged according to such criteria.

TABLE 1
Factors to Consider When Implementing Champagne's (1993) Approach to Placement Decisions

1. Progress to Date
   - Program Provided
   - Student Progress
   - Impact of Student on Others
   - Cost Considerations
2. Appropriate Program
   - Interventions Requiring Special Settings
   - Portability Test
   - Trained Personnel
   - Opportunities for Inclusion
   - Consideration for Alternative Schedules
3. Protections Afforded
   - Behavioral Criteria for Integration
   - Intervention Plan Focusing on Criteria
   - Schedule for Reviewing Progress

Strategies That Work for Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Conditions, Curriculum, and Consequences



In attempting to plan appropriate programs for adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD), teachers often find themselves torn between the requirements of a mandated curriculum and the obvious needs of the students. Among the components of the secondary program that should be available to students with disabilities are the following (Halpern, 1987):

- Systematic instruction (including teaching for generalization).
- Age-appropriate instructional materials.
- Parent involvement.
- Social integration of students into the entire school environment.
- Student access to—and placement in—all instructional programs (regular, remedial, and vocational).
- Community-based instruction (including actual job experience and practice of social-interpersonal skills).
- Evaluation (and documentation in terms of student outcomes).

Parents and educators alike agree that the secondary school program should prepare the student for life after high school—for transition to work (or postsecondary education) and survival in the community. The curriculum should also address specific adolescent needs, tasks, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Further, for every student receiving special education, instructional strategies should be selected according to individual needs, as addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). In many school districts, however, a secondary-level student with E/BD is expected to cope with the demands of the regular school environment; little attention is given to his or her individual needs. Given the limits

of time and resources, what should teachers teach? What should adolescents with E/BD learn?

In 1968, Frank Hewett's pioneering textbook about classroom instruction of students with E/BD introduced a developmental sequence of educational goals: attention, response, order, exploratory, social, mastery, and achievement. Hewett described the condition of emotional disturbance in terms of a student's excesses or deficiencies related to each of these educational goals. He also suggested that children without disabilities usually master the first five levels before they come to school but those with E/BD probably need to achieve these goals in school.

Hewett also proposed a model for the interrelated variables that affect learning—a Learning Triangle with "Child" in the middle and the sides labelled "Task, Structure, and Reward." According to Hewett (1968),

> If the teacher can select the task the child is ready to undertake and which is consistent with the educational goals most relevant to his problem, provide him with a truly meaningful reward for his efforts, and maintain the degree of structure or control necessary to insure efficient learning, the learning process is under way (p. 61).

In the second edition of this textbook (Hewett & Taylor, 1980), the developmental sequence is described as the "Levels of Learning Competence," and the three sides of the triangle are renamed "Conditions, Curriculum, and Consequences." Hewett's paradigm has proven useful to teachers in the field of E/BD in (a) conceptualizing emotional disturbance in educational terms and (b) describing the requirements of a relevant educational program.

In the following discussion, these "Three Cs" are related specifically to the instruction of adolescents with E/BD. This is not a comprehensive explanation of all that constitutes an appropriate program for such youngsters, but rather a few of the many elements that may be under the control and direction of instructional personnel.

Conditions

The available literature suggests that conditions of learning include a variety of environmental factors such as the facility, school climate, classroom arrangement, rules, routine, schedule, and other human beings in the setting.

A Positive School Climate

All students learn better and more in a motivating environment—one that meets their physical, psychological, social, and educational needs. For adolescents with E/BD, who are notoriously difficult to motivate, providing a positive school environment is crucial. Components of a positive school climate include

- *Physical and Psychological Safety for Students and Adults.* It is essential that students feel safe in the school—from intruders, from the faculty and staff, and from each other. They must not be subjected to harsh punishment, ridicule, or humiliation.
- *Knowledgeable, Skilled, Charismatic, and Courageous Faculty and Staff.* A strong background in behavior management, a positive self-concept, and a considerable measure of understanding of the characteristics and cultures of these students are prerequisites for the teachers and other staff who will be working with them. Faculty and staff must exhibit a sense of community and hold society (and its laws) in high regard. Adults in the school setting should also maintain their dignity; for example, dressing properly shows that they believe school is an important place. Among the other desirable descriptors for personnel are knowledgeable, prepared, confident, firm, fair, patient, truthful, kind, respectful, polite, neat, trustworthy, capable of self-disclosure, verbally positive, and possessing a sense of humor.
- *Attainable goals and objectives.* Goals and objectives must be individualized, developmental, measurable, and attainable. Students should collaborate in setting goals and objectives for group work as well as their own IEPs.
- *Relevant curriculum.* The curriculum should provide for a variety of experiences that relate to the real lives, problems, or needs of the students.
- *Positive instructional techniques.* Instructional techniques should be both effective and humane. Schooling is not a positive experience if the student encounters continued failure or is embarrassed by his or her lack of achievement.
- *Opportunities for socialization.* Social skills, which students with E/BD are usually lacking, are not learned solely in a study carrel. Students need to learn to communicate and work with one another in a "natural" group setting (under adequate supervision). Instruction in social skills is generally part of the curriculum of daily instruction for students with E/BD. Students will also

profit from peer tutorial instruction and cooperative learning activities.

- *Beauty.* For many years, the educational settings for students with E/BD have often been the least attractive buildings and/or rooms available in the district. Considerable attention should be given to the aesthetic qualities of the school, classroom, and work stations of students with E/BD.
- *A welcoming climate for families.* To ensure family involvement, one of the necessary components of a secondary program, the school should be a welcoming place. Parents should be invited to participate in the program to whatever extent possible.
- *Links between and among the adolescent's "worlds."* There are several worlds in which an adolescent must function: family, peers, school, and community. The school itself can provide opportunities for student involvement in each of these worlds (e.g., socializing with peers, communicating and collaborating with family, forming relationships with other adults in the community, and working with public and private agencies).

To the fullest extent possible, the educational program for adolescents with E/BD should be "community-referenced" and community-based. The skills necessary for successful integration into the community are best acquired in the settings in which they will be used, rather than in the classroom. Further, vocational instruction should be provided in both the school and community for all student with disabilities. Various authors (e.g., Boone, 1993) have developed comprehensive guidelines for establishing and implementing vocational instruction in the community for students with disabilities. The primary learning environment for most adolescents, however, is still the classroom. Some important considerations for the classroom environment follow.

The Need for Structure

Whether in a regular school or a special facility, the learning environment for students with E/BD should be highly structured in terms of rules, routine, schedules, and expectations. A behavior management system based on applied behavioral analysis (learning theory) is widely supported. Students must come to understand (in the relatively short period of time left for schooling) that there is a consequence for every behavior—appropriate or inappropriate.

Classroom rules should be few, fair, clear, displayed, taught, and consistently enforced. Rules must have no "loopholes" that can be challenged.

Students should participate in the establishment of rules, routine, schedule, and expectations, all of which should be reasonable. A general rule of thumb is that most students should be earning most of their points most of the time.

Verbal abuse and violent behavior must be disallowed and result in appropriate consequences. There must be a logical consequence for any act of aggression, "putdown," or abusive language. If there is no consequence, then the students may believe that such behavior is acceptable.

In order to change the behavior of a student with E/BD, every adult with whom he or she comes into contact must (a) know the rules and consequences and (b) be consistent in their enforcement. This requires considerable cooperation between and among the faculty and staff.

Classroom Arrangement

The classroom should be physically arranged so the teacher can visually monitor every student. Each student should have adequate personal space and physical comfort (e.g., proper heating, cooling, comfortable furniture, sufficient space between students, storage for personal items, light, air). If the students are expected to talk to one another, they can be arranged in a circle; if not, lining up the desks or tables (like "real school") is a much better choice.

The Premack Principle

This principle—that a high frequency behavior will serve as a reinforcer for a low frequency behavior (Premack, 1959)—is a valuable guideline when scheduling activities for either the entire class or an individual student. When an individual or group of students has completed a designated amount of a nonpreferred activity, he, she, or they may be reinforced with a preferred task. If a student's course of study requires changing classes, as is usually the case in a regular school program, pacing of instruction is especially important. One period of a difficult (or relatively uninteresting) subject should be followed by one period of a less demanding (or more interesting) subject.

Curriculum

Students with E/BD need to be provided educational experiences available to other students and more. They need academics, social skills, thinking skills, computer skills, physical education, moral education, recreation, career exploration, vocational education, job exploration,

job placement, and followup assistance well into their adult lives. Many E/BD students have missed experiences that usually occur naturally in families and communities before children come to school. Many have not eaten in restaurants, learned to swim, or gone camping with their families, nor have they routinely been welcomed in neighborhood recreational facilities, community organizations, or even the church. Even when they have experienced positive learning situations—in the home, neighborhood, school, and community—their behavior mitigates against benefiting fully from the experience.

The curriculum for adolescents with E/BD must be more effective and more motivating than that for students without disabilities. Further, the program should meet each student's individual needs. In that respect, the curriculum serves a therapeutic function, ameliorating many of the problems that have contributed to the student's being identified as emotionally/behaviorally disordered.

Using Thematic Units

An effective strategy for keeping all members of a group engaged in a learning experience is the integrated thematic unit, in which all skill and content areas are related to a certain topic or theme. The use of units in the regular school program is a common practice in the areas of science, social studies, and health, and is not a new special education approach: Ingram suggested the use of instructional units as an appropriate strategy for "slow learners" in 1935. Meyen (1981) wrote an entire textbook on the development and use of instructional units in both general and special education (the first edition of which was published in 1972). More recently, Ensminger and Dangel (1992) have described planning and implementation of integrated units as a "confluence of best practices" in special education.

Selecting Instructional Materials

Materials should be relevant to the students' lives and understandable because they are related to what the youngsters see in the news, on television, in the neighborhoods, and in the community (e.g., newspapers, current magazines, and pictures of real people and places). Whenever possible, classroom lecture and discussion should be enhanced with concrete, manipulable materials (e.g., the real thing or a working model). Some curricular considerations for students with E/BD include the following:

- Do not resort to "infantile" materials to teach basic skills. Use materials appropriate for the chronological ages of the students (e.g., newspapers, magazines, "bites" of videos or movies).
- Choose positive materials (that show people and society in a favorable light). Students can be encouraged to find stories with happy endings and poems, jokes, or songs that are both humorous and suitable for sharing at school.
- Teach social skills every day. Select appropriate skills from among the available commercial programs or use reinforced modeling to teach any skill for which there is an immediate need. Many published materials include suggestions for teaching such skills as anger control, moral reasoning, assertiveness, and aggression replacement.
- Select materials that encourage student interaction (under supervision). Adolescents need to learn to talk to one another and adults—appropriately, without putdowns, arguments, or fights. The scripts for plays (even Shakespeare) or "after school special" television shows (that may be available from the local newspaper) are useful for this purpose.
- As mentioned previously, students with E/BD need positive and effective models—both in and outside of the school. In the classroom, appropriate models include not only real people, but also videos, excerpts from television, film strips, records, pictures, and books.

A "Preventive Curriculum"

In addition to the subjects required for high school graduation, adolescents with E/BD should be offered short courses or modules on a variety of topics that relate to specific adolescent concerns. These topics can also be considered a "preventive curriculum" for students without emotional problems (Guetzloe, 1989). Such offerings might include

- Basic skills (for those who need developmental or remedial work).
- Learning strategies (e.g., organizational skills, mnemonics, study skills, self-questioning, and error monitoring).
- Stress reduction (e. g., time management, organizational skills, relaxation training), coping skills, problem solving, decision making, self-control, and assertiveness training.
- Prescriptive physical education (e.g., weight gain, weight loss, body building, and exercise).

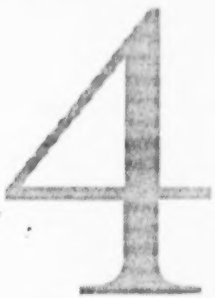
- Individual "life" sports (e.g., tennis, racquetball, handball, golf, swimming, and running).
- "Outlets" (e.g., art, music, dance, drama, and creative writing).
- Adolescent health problems (e.g., nutrition, hygiene, orthodontics, acne, substance abuse, and sex education).
- Grooming and dress (e.g., clothing selection, color analysis, and cosmetics).
- Communication skills.
- Juvenile law.
- Marriage, family living, and child care (and related legal issues).
- Use of leisure time (e.g., hobbies, community service, and recreational reading).

Consequences

Programs for students with E/BD deliver many kinds of consequences: positive, aversive, primary, secondary, logical, natural, and contrived. Programs at the secondary level should emphasize consequences that are natural, logical, and positive. At the early stages of introducing a behavior-management system, it may be necessary to use concrete reinforcers (e.g., "funny money" or tokens related to the unit of study). Particularly with secondary students, there is a need for tokens that cannot be counterfeited. Desirable backup reinforcers for secondary students usually relate to "work avoidance" (e.g., getting out of doing paperwork, earning extra physical activity, listening to music, or being excused from homework). Specific items that appeal to many adolescents are hotel-sized shampoos and lotions, used clothing, photographs (of teachers or classmates), or other items that can be gifts for parents and significant others.

It should be noted that the Learning Triangle (Hewett, 1968) is a useful model for another reason—the relationship between and among the conditions, curriculum, and consequences. If the conditions happen to be terrible on any given day, the curriculum must be better than usual and the consequences highly desirable. If the conditions are good, and the curriculum is interesting and enjoyable, the consequences do not seem to be so important. If all of the Three Cs are appropriate for the group, wonderful things can happen.

Timeout: Best Practices and Legal Guidelines



A common and effective behavioral intervention for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) is timeout—a behavior-reduction procedure. The intervention generally involves placing a student in a less reinforcing environment for a period of time contingent on inappropriate behavior (Brantner & Doherty, 1983). However, timeout is a complicated procedure which involves more than merely removing a student from activities and returning him or her to the environment following a brief period. Timeout requires careful planning. To increase the effectiveness of timeout and decrease the possibility of abuses of the procedure, teachers should make decisions on various aspects of its use prior to implementation (Harris, 1985; Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988). Although the laws that govern special education (e.g., IDEA, Section 504) are quite detailed, they are silent with respect to the use of behavior reduction procedures. An absence of federal guidelines has led to a number of court cases regarding behavior reduction procedures, including the use of timeout. Principles extrapolated from these cases are instructive and can serve as guidelines for the legally correct use of timeout.

Best Practices

Enriching the Classroom Environment

Timeout is based on the assumption that because a student is moved from a more reinforcing to a less reinforcing environment, the behavior that results in timeout will decrease in frequency (Wolery et al., 1988). If timeout is to work it is important that a meaningful difference exists between *time-in*, the time that the student is in the classroom, and timeout. This means that the time-in environment must be a stimulating and interesting one in which social, activity, and/or token reinforcement is available for appropriate behavior.

21

Selecting the Type of Timeout

Several different timeout procedures have been identified that teachers can use in the classroom. In each procedure, emission of the target behavior results in a period of time where the teacher reduces access to reinforcers. The primary decision that teachers must make is whether the student will be removed from the time-in or whether the reinforcing conditions present in time-in will be removed from the student. When reinforcers are removed from the student, the timeout is referred to as nonexclusionary. Examples of nonexclusionary timeout include planned ignoring, removing reinforcing objects, and the timeout ribbon. The difficulty with nonexclusionary timeout is that before teachers can remove reinforcing conditions they must know what is reinforcing to the student and then be able to remove them. In the complex environment of the classroom this can be very difficult.

Timeout procedures that remove students from the time-in environment are referred to as exclusionary. These procedures are more intrusive than nonexclusionary because a change is required in the student's location. There are at least three major types of exclusionary timeout: contingent observation, exclusion, and isolation/seclusion. In contingent observation, the student is removed to another location in the classroom and instructed to watch but not participate in activities. When exclusion timeout is used, the student is removed from instructional activities and is not able to watch classroom activities. The student, however, is not removed to an isolation area. In isolation/seclusion timeout the student, contingent on misbehavior, is required to leave the classroom and enter a separate timeout room for a brief duration of time. Isolation/seclusion is the most restrictive form of timeout and the most likely to be abused.

Research has shown that these types of timeout are effective in reducing behavior. In determining the type of timeout to be used, teachers should consider each type and choose the less intrusive timeout procedure that is effective in bringing behavioral change.

Using Verbal Explanations

Teachers also have to determine if they will use verbal explanations when administering timeout. A verbalized explanation to the student indicates why he or she is being timed out. Verbal explanations should be business-like and brief and specify the behaviors leading to timeout (Wolery et al., 1988). Research on the use of verbal explanations is equivo-

cal, meaning that such use appears to neither hinder nor facilitate the effectiveness of timeout.

Using Warnings

A warning is a brief statement given to a misbehaving student indicating that if the inappropriate behavior continues, timeout will be administered. Research suggests that timeout with warnings and timeout without warnings are equally effective in reducing target behaviors (Yell, 1991). When warnings are delivered prior to using timeout, however, students generally need fewer timeouts and spend less time in timeout and away from classroom activities (Yell, 1991). Using a warning before administering timeout may result in a less intrusive intervention without reducing its effectiveness in diminishing target behaviors.

If a warning is used, teachers should give brief and business-like warnings rather than long, involved warnings. Finally, Wolery et al. (1988) indicated that only one warning should be given and, if it does not result in immediate compliance, then timeout should be implemented.

Selecting the Duration of Timeout

Another important decision involves the duration or length of the timeout condition. Duration is the intensity of the timeout procedure (Wolery et al., 1988). Minimum levels of intensity are often ineffective and too high a level of intensity can be unnecessarily intrusive without producing additional benefits. According to Harris (1985), durations ranging from 10 seconds to 3 hours have produced reductions in target behaviors. Durations that are too long, however, are both practically, legally, and ethically difficult. Long durations can interfere with a student's opportunity to learn, suppress behavior in general as well as suppressing target behavior, and may increase the rate of undesired behavior (Harris, 1985). Cooper, Heron, and Heron (1987) suggest that 5 minutes is a reasonable rule of thumb for initial implementation. Teachers should determine and use durations that are as short as possible and yet produce the desired changes in behavior.

Setting Release Criteria

Student release is another critical aspect of timeout. Possible criteria for releasing students from timeout include

- *Fixed duration.* Release is not contingent on behavior when in timeout; the student is released after he or she has served the

complete duration. For example, if the timeout duration is 3 minutes, then the student would be released after 3 minutes regardless of his or her behavior while in timeout. The problem with using only a fixed duration is that disruption during timeout may be greater and inappropriate behaviors occurring near the end of the timeout period may be negatively reinforced by release (Harris, 1985).

- *Minimum duration plus extension until appropriate behavior occurs.* The teacher assigns a minimum duration that the student is required to serve. To be released at the end of the timeout period, the student must be behaving appropriately. If the student is not behaving appropriately timeout is extended until appropriate behavior is displayed.
- *Minimum duration plus extension for a fixed interval.* In contrast, the teacher can assign a minimum duration that the student is required to serve. To be released at the end of the timeout period, the student must behave appropriately for a predetermined interval. Inappropriate behavior during this interval prior to release requires an additional interval of the same length. For example, if the teacher decides on an interval of 25 seconds and the timeout duration is 3 minutes, then the student has to serve the duration of 3 minutes. The student must be behaving appropriately for the final 25 seconds of the 3 minutes. Inappropriate behavior during this interval will extend timeout for another 25 seconds before release.
- *Release contingent on appropriate behavior.* Release from timeout can be contingent on the student displaying appropriate behavior for a specific interval. For example, if the teacher determines that the timeout interval will be 3 minutes, then the student has to behave appropriately for 3 minutes. Following 3 minutes of appropriate behavior, the student is released from timeout.

Legal Guidelines

Exclusion and isolation/seclusion timeout procedures are both intrusive and restrictive. Guidelines for the legally sound use of exclusion and isolation/seclusion timeout have been developed in a number of federal court decisions (Yell, 1994). These court cases have involved lawsuits brought by parents against teachers, principals, and school districts that used exclusionary timeout procedures to reduce the undesirable behaviors of students with E/BD. The cases make it clear that if exclusion or isolation/seclusion timeout is used inappropriately it could be a depri-

vation of a student's constitutional and educational rights and possibly open the teacher, principal, and school district to civil lawsuits. In the absence of school district or state guidelines, it is important that practitioners follow several principles when using timeout. The following principles have been extrapolated from these cases by Yell (1994).

- *Be aware of local or state policies regarding timeout.* Teachers and administrators should be aware of local and state policies regulating the use of timeout. If prohibitions or restrictions to its use exist, then they must be followed. Failure to do so could result in dismissal or legal action. If no guidelines are available, the principles listed below should be followed.
- *Have written procedures. Teachers* must have written procedures about the use of timeout. Parents and students must be informed of the possible use of timeout and which behaviors will lead to its use. Rules, length of time, and release should be explained. In addition to written procedures, parents should be shown how timeout will be administered. They should be given sufficient opportunity to ask questions.
- *Obtain Permission.* Teachers should receive written consent from parents if exclusion or isolation/seclusion timeout procedures are to be used. The logical time to record written consent is during the discussions of the major goals and modifications of the special education student's educational program. For the student with E/BD, educational programs often will include goals involving reducing undesirable behaviors and increasing desirable, replacement behaviors. If timeout is to be used to achieve educational goals for a student, it must be included in the IEP. By incorporating timeout and its use in the IEP, once the IEP is agreed to by the parent, the teacher will have informed consent to use timeout.
- *Timeout must serve a legitimate educational function.* The courts have stated that the use of timeout must serve a legitimate educational function including reducing dangerous or disruptive behavior, teaching appropriate behavior, and protecting the educational environment from disruption. Timeout should be used in accordance with the principle of *hierarchical application* (Braaten, Simpson, Rosell, & Reilly, 1988) and the *fair-pair rule* (Kaplan, 1991). According to the principle of hierarchical application, more intrusive procedures to reduce behavior (e.g., exclusion and isolation/seclusion timeout) should only be used when less intrusive procedures to reduce behavior (e.g., nonexclusionary timeout and contingent observation) have failed. The fair-pair rule states that if a behavior is to be decreased, then another behavior should be increased.

- *Timeout must be used in a reasonable manner.* Timeout should not be used in a harsh or punitive manner and should be proportionate to the offense committed and the age and physical condition of the student. It should be administered according to teacher-established guidelines and not stem from teacher anger toward the student. If a person other than the teacher will be implementing timeout (e.g., paraprofessional) then he or she must be thoroughly trained in its proper use.

  Timeout lengths of 5 to 10 minutes with younger students and 15 to 20 minutes with older students should be viewed by teachers as being maximum durations. Durations in excess of these standards may be viewed as excessive by the courts. In cases where students may be a danger to themselves or others if released after maximum times have been reached, the teacher should notify administrators in charge of the school or program.

- *Keep thorough records.* When an intervention as intrusive as exclusionary timeout is used, teachers need to keep a thorough record of each instance of its use. Elements that should be present in the record include (a) the behavior that precipitated the use of the procedure, (b) the specific procedure(s) used, (c) the length of time the student was in timeout, (d) the results of the procedure, and (e) witnesses present. When isolation/seclusion timeout is used, parents and supervisors should be notified. Figure 1 is a timeout recording form developed by Yell (1994).

- *Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of timeout.* Failure to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of timeout is a frequent misuse of the procedure (Nelson & Rutherford, 1983). Teachers should evaluate the use of a timeout intervention. The data collected can be used to assist teachers in making decisions about whether the intervention is working and if target behaviors are being reduced. And, since teachers are accountable to supervisors and parents, data collection is useful for these purposes, as well.

In all, timeout is a complex intervention that requires careful planning and ongoing evaluation. Because timeout is an intrusive and restrictive procedure it should be used with caution. Persons using it should be familiar with all aspects of the procedure. Timeout should only be used if it is part of an individualized behavior reduction/replacement plan. Teachers need to be aware of school district and state policies regulating the use of the intervention. If such policies do not exist, then recent court decisions do offer important guidelines to the proper use of timeout. The use and documentation of timeout in accordance with these principles will help to ensure that timeout is used in an effective and legally correct manner.

FIGURE 1
Timeout Recording Form

Student _____ Date _____

Name _____ Time _____

Description of incident:

Did behavior endanger the safety of the student or others or disrupt the learning environment? If so how?

Intervention(s) used:

- ☐ Verbal Direction
- ☐ Warning
- ☐ Contingent Observation
- ☐ Exclusion Timeout
- ☐ Isolation/Seclusion Timeout

Length of Timeout:

Results of Timeout:

Remarks:

Signature of teacher: _____

Signature of witness: _____

Signature of supervisor: _____

Note. From "Timeout and Students with Behavior Disorders: A Legal Analysis," by Mitchell L. Yell, 1994, *Education and Treatment of Children, 17*, P. 299. Copyright 1994 by The Pressley Ridge Schools. Reprinted with permission.

Best Practices for Developing Level Systems

Level systems are also widely used as the primary behavior management system in classrooms for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD; Morgan & Jenson, 1988). A level system consists of target academic and social behaviors arranged in a sequential hierarchy of "levels," ranging from the most basic skills at the lowest level to the most complex skills at the highest level. Privileges are also arranged hierarchically, with the most desired reinforcers available at the highest levels. Part of what makes a level system attractive to teachers is that it is usually applied uniformly to all students in the class. Each student in the class is expected to progress through the same set of target behaviors on the same reinforcement system. However, the ease of administration of standardized level systems may interfere with individualized instruction for students.

While level systems are a popular management tool for students with E/BD, there are concerns about the legality of certain aspects of the design and implementation of level systems (Scheuermann, Webber, Partin, & Knies, 1994). These concerns, all of which pertain to a failure to individualize level systems, include common level-system practices in three general areas: restricted access to mainstream environments, curricular concerns, and procedural concerns. Unless these issues are addressed, we hesitate to recommend level systems as a "best practice" for students with E/BD. However, we believe it is possible to design level systems that meet the legal mandates for individually planned educational programs in the least restrictive environment, while at the same time providing the structure and systematic shaping and fading necessary for effective behavior management. The following paragraphs delineate concerns about standardized level systems and outline a decision-making model recommended for developing level systems that meet the mandates of the law.

• Restricted Access

Level systems as they are commonly designed and implemented may prevent compliance with federal statutes and case laws containing requirements for the education of students with disabilities. Specifically, level systems may deny students their right to education in the least restrictive environment, as determined by the IEP team using individualized assessment information, and their right to an individualized education program, including individually determined curricular goals and strategies.

Many level systems allow access to general education classes only at the higher levels of the level system, or even only upon completion of the level system. Some level systems even specify which classes are available to students at a given level (e.g., P.E., art, academic classes). Making placement in general education classes contingent upon attainment of a predetermined level appears to make access to general education classes a privilege which must be earned. This approach is contradictory to a student's right to placement in the least restrictive environment as determined by each student's IEP committee. Access to the LRE does not have to be earned by students. On the contrary, the burden of accountability falls on school personnel to justify why the student learns best in a more restrictive setting. Best practices would dictate that educational placement and access to nondisabled peers not be used as level-system privileges.

• Curricular Concerns

The target behaviors specified within a level system appear to be the behavioral curriculum—what students need to learn (Scheuermann et al., 1994). Two concerns have been raised pertaining to this curriculum. First, some level systems specify behavioral expectations that apply to all students in the group. This creates a situation in which students are required to meet the expectations of the program, as opposed to the program being personalized to meet students' individual needs. Some level systems allow for specifying individual target behaviors in addition to group behaviors. While this is closer to the intent of the IDEA, each student's IEP committee must still determine that the group expectations are appropriate for individual students.

Second, the sequence in which target behaviors are arranged often appears to be arbitrary, presumably hierarchical—ranging from most basic behaviors to most complex behaviors. At first, this practice appears to reflect the principle of shaping. However, it is unlikely that the same

hierarchy (or sequence of behaviors) will be appropriate for all students. One student may have difficulty mastering a behavior (e.g., attention to task) that another student exhibits effortlessly. Therefore, requiring all students to progress through the same sequence of behaviors again appears to violate the IDEA's requirement for individualized decision making.

• Procedural Concerns

Level systems often utilize procedures for placement and movement within the level system that fail to allow for individual decision making. For example, many level systems require students to enter at the lowest, or beginning, level. This practice assumes that all students have the same deficits and need to enter the behavioral curriculum at the same point. Rather, placement in the level system should be determined by each student's IEP committee.

Standardized level systems also specify advancement criteria that delineate how and when students are eligible to move from one level to the next. Advancement criteria are usually in the form of a minimum number of days required at each level or a minimum number of days in which the target behaviors at that level are exhibited. Advancement criteria are usually the same for all students in the group. However, this practice ignores the IDEA's mandate for individualized decision making. Criteria for the mastery of the behaviors at any given level will probably differ from student to student. It may take one student significantly longer to master a set of behaviors than it will another student. IEP committees should decide appropriate, individualized advancement criteria for each student.

Another concern is that some level systems have extremely high criteria for advancement within the system. When determining advancement criteria, the IEP committee should consider both developmental appropriateness for a particular student, as supported by recent baseline assessment information, and the extent to which advancement criteria reflect expectations for chronological age peers in general education classes in the same school or district. Furthermore, students' progress through the level system should be carefully monitored. If a student is not successful in meeting the criteria and progressing through the system, the IEP committee should reevaluate, among other things, the appropriateness of the advancement criteria, the target behaviors, and/or the sequence of target behaviors.

Finally, many level systems incorporate provisions in which a student may be returned to a lower level, a level at which the student previously met criterion for target behaviors. The theoretical basis for this downward movement is often unclear. In some level systems, the student is returned to a previous level because of failure to achieve criterion at a present level within a given time. The implication is that the student has not yet mastered prerequisite skills for the current level and needs to return to an earlier level to improve production or fluency of those prerequisites. This explanation is consistent with the view of the target behavior specified in a level system as the behavioral curriculum. However, because a "drop" in levels also means a reduction in the desirability or amount of reinforcers or privileges (reinforcers increase in desirability from one level to the next), returning a student to an earlier level to improve "learning" is accompanied by a potentially punishing contingency (reduction in privileges). While the idea of a student having additional practice in more basic behaviors may be sound, this should not be accompanied by a punitive consequence.

In many level systems, downward movement is intended to be a punishing consequence for misbehavior rather than a curricular decision. The student is moved to a lower level where fewer privileges and less desirable reinforcers are available as a consequence for severe or continued misbehavior. If the sequence of target behaviors specified in the level system is in fact the behavioral curriculum, the IEP committee must determine that the student is not being denied access to the curriculum of the level system because of behaviors related to the disability (*S-1 v. Turlington*, 1981). This means that if levels contain different behaviors as well as different reinforcers, then changing levels to deny reinforcers also results in a change in target behaviors—a curricular change. The curricular change must be an IEP team determination.

A Decision-Making Model for Individualized Level Systems

As previously described, many current level systems raise potential legal questions because of their failure to address individual needs. As in any other aspect of educational planning for students with disabilities, the needs of individual students must drive decision making in the development of the behavioral curriculum and the strategy for presenting that curriculum. We recommend that this be done by systematically addressing a series of questions, as presented in the decision-making model in Table 2. Some of these questions should be answered by the IEP committee; others can be answered by the teacher. Carefully addressing

Table 2
Decision-Making Model for Developing Individualized Systems

Phase 1: Determining the Curriculum

- ▶ What does the student need to learn?
- ▶ What are the criterion levels needed for this student to master the target behaviors?
- ▶ In what sequence should target behaviors be presented?

Phase II: Developing the Strategy

- ▶ Which reinforcers or privileges will be used?
- ▶ Through which contingency structure will students earn reinforcers?
  - ▶ To develop a level system:
    - ▷ Organize target behaviors into levels
    - ▷ Determine which reinforcers will be available at each level.
    - ▷ Decide how the student will advance from one level to the next.

Phase III: Reducing Undesirable Behavior

- ▶ Which behaviors need to be decreased?
- ▶ Which behavior-reductive techniques should be used?

each question for each student will result in individualized behavioral curricula and strategies and will help maintain students' rights to individually planned educational programs and to individually determined placements.

If a level system is the preferred strategy for teaching the target behaviors of the behavioral curriculum, then individual student needs must determine decisions about the level system, as opposed to a class-wide, district-wide, or any standardized approach in which a predetermined group system determines decisions for individual students. Developing an individualized level system requires a systematic approach to considering the needs of each student who will participate in the system. Following the decision-making model will help to ensure individualization of the level system. This model provides a template for posing ques-

tions in three general areas: selection and sequence of behaviors to be taught, design of a formal reinforcement program, and development of a behavior reductive technique, when appropriate.

Phase I: Determining the Curriculum

The following three questions must be considered by each student's IEP committee to determine the behavioral curriculum for that particular student. The target behaviors can then be sequenced and organized into a level system for that student.

What does the student need to learn?
The first question asks which classroom and social behaviors are critical to this student's success? The IEP committee should consider the requirements for success in the student's current and future target environments. Utilizing observational recordings in general education classroom, the cafeteria, on the playground, in the hall, and in the special education classroom can assist with this determination. Using this data to compare the student's current level of behavioral functioning with that of a same-age peer without disabilities allows the IEP team to consider the discrepancy and pinpoint behavioral deficits. Another crucial piece of assessment data is a list of behavioral expectations for targeted environments. It is important to determine which behaviors are reinforced in the general education classroom (or at home or work) and which behaviors are punished. This may vary by setting. These expectations are then compared to the student's present behavioral repertoire. Any behaviors required for success in the current environment or in future environments, and which the student is not currently exhibiting, should be designated as behaviors to be learned.

A final assessment strategy that might be useful in determining a behavioral curriculum is a social skills assessment. Most published social skills curricula contain curriculum-based assessments (e. g., Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980), or the student could be assessed with a norm-referenced instrument (e. g., Walker & McConnell, 1988). The identified social skills deficits, as well as any prerequisite behaviors not currently exhibited by the student, become target behaviors in the behavioral curriculum.

What are the criterion levels needed for this student to master the target behaviors?
In setting criterion levels for each target behavior, the IEP committee should consider both expectations for age peers and expectations in the next target environment. It is also necessary to determine at which

level the behaviors will be taught. If a student is being taught at the acquisition level, then mastery criterion should reflect the student's current level. For example, if a student is being taught to complete math assignments and has never demonstrated that behavior before, then criterion for mastery at the acquisition level may be to complete three math assignments in a row. Likewise, criteria will differ if a student has already learned the skill and the instructional goal is increased fluency or generalization of the skill. These criterion levels must be determined individually by the IEP team based on current assessment data.

In what sequence should target behaviors be presented?
The IEP committee must determine in what order the student will be expected to master target behaviors. There are two possible approaches to sequencing target behaviors. One approach is to sequence target behaviors from most basic to most complex (for this student). This appears to be the most common approach. This decision should be made based on current assessment information for the student regarding present skills, behavioral deficits, behavioral history, rate of learning, and so forth.

Another approach avoids the issue of sequencing by presenting all target behaviors simultaneously and simply increasing criterion levels over time. This approach only works if the number of target behaviors to be learned is small or if the student is already exhibiting most of the target behaviors but not to satisfactory criterion levels.

Phase II: Developing the Strategy

Once the behavioral curriculum has been determined, the next step is to determine which privileges or reinforcers should be available at each level and develop a structure through which students can earn them. If a level system is the preferred structure, then additional questions should be answered regarding the format of the level system.

Which reinforcers or privileges will be used?
This question determines reinforcers that students can earn for exhibiting target behaviors at specified criterion levels. Reinforcers can be social privileges, material items, or tokens. To enhance generalization of these target behaviors, school personnel should, whenever possible, select reinforcers that reflect the types of reinforcers available in future less restrictive environments and that are age-appropriate (Wolery et al., 1988). We also recommended choosing reinforcers that are easy to deliver and easy to fade. Access to the LRE and nondisabled peers should not be used as reinforcers. School personnel must be careful not to re-

quire that a student earn access to activities which are available noncontingently to students in general education. Requiring students in special education to earn activities such as lunch in the cafeteria, a locker in the hall, or access to mainstream classes may be a violation of Section 504 of The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if students in general education are not required to earn these same activities.

Through which contingency structure will students earn reinforcers?
Token economies are a common contingency structure in classes for students with E/BD. Teachers use tokens (e.g., points, chips, stickers, marbles) to provide immediate, feedback to students about their behavior. Later, tokens are exchanged for backup reinforcers. Most level systems incorporate some type of token economy as the contingency structure. The token system is usually faded as students progress through the level system.

If a level system is to be used in conjunction with a token economy, attention to the following decisions will help individualize the level system for each student. First, decide how target behaviors will be organized into levels. If the IEP committee has decided to address all target behaviors simultaneously, the teacher may then assign behaviors to different levels according to increases in criteria, with the lowest criteria at the lowest levels, successively higher criteria at each successive level, and the final criteria for mastery located at the highest levels. More commonly, target behaviors are divided among levels, presenting a few behaviors at the first level, then adding new target behaviors at each consecutive level, following the sequence determined by the IEP committee.

Next, decide which reinforcers will be available at each level. Usually, reinforcers range from least desirable reinforcers at the lowest levels to most desirable reinforcers at the highest levels of the system. The desirability of the reinforcers at each successive level should motivate students to strive to successfully exhibit target behaviors and thus progress through the system. The higher levels also include reinforcers more common to targeted environments. This may present a problem because reinforcers commonly available in general education classrooms are often not as desirable to students as those available in special education classrooms. Thus, many students choose to remain on lower levels since the reinforcers are more desirable there. It is important to provide status reinforcers and peer reinforcement at the higher levels of the system. Simultaneously fading reinforcement for generalization purposes and requiring more work from the student at the highest level may result in frustration for the student.

Finally, decide how the student will advance from one level to the next. Each student's IEP team should determine appropriate criteria for movement through the level system. Movement criteria may consist of a minimum amount of time at each level, a minimum number of days in which the student exhibits target behaviors for that level at the specified criterion levels, or simply maintaining a level until criterion levels for all target behaviors at that level are met. Any movement criterion should be based on recent individual and ecological assessment information for that student.

Phase III: Reducing Undesirable Behavior

A level system, because it is basically a reinforcement system, is best used to shape and reinforce desired student behaviors. Misbehaviors, although related to the behavioral curriculum, need to be addressed separately. IEP committees should address two questions in developing a behavior reductive program: (a) which behaviors need to be decreased, and (b) which strategy should be used for this purpose.

Which behaviors need to be decreased?
Assessment information obtained for curriculum development will also provide valuable information regarding behaviors currently exhibited by the student that are unacceptable in present or future environments. By comparing the target student's behavior to that of a same-age peer, excessive inappropriate behaviors will become apparent. Once these behaviors have been identified, a functional assessment may help school personnel determine the best intervention by identifying the contextual determinants of those behaviors (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993). Depending upon results of the functional assessment, interventions may consist of modifying antecedents or consequences, or teaching appropriate alternative behaviors (Carr & Durand, 1985; Sasso & Reimers, 1988).

Which behavior reductive technique should be used?
By carefully choosing the behavioral curriculum through effective assessment and by systematically reinforcing prosocial behavior, many inappropriate student behaviors may be reduced. Known as *differential reinforcement*, this is a commonly used technique for behavior reduction. However, the IEP committee may determine that some of the inappropriate behaviors targeted for reduction need a more direct approach. If so, the next step is to determine the specific behavior reductive technique to be used. Whichever technique is selected (e.g., timeout, response cost, overcorrection), the behavior reductive procedure should be applied independent of the level system and should not involve downward movement in the level system as a consequence for misbehavior.

One possible alternative recommended by Bauer and Shea (1988) is short-term placement on a disciplinary level, contingent upon display of predetermined inappropriate behaviors. While on this level, access to privilege can be restricted, but the student can continue to receive feedback on target appropriate behaviors, thus maintaining the continuity of the behavioral curriculum.

A Final Consideration

Finally, placement decisions should be made by each student's IEP team independent of the student's status in the level system. Regardless of where the student is in the level system, the IEP team, at any time, can decide to place the student in a less restrictive environment for all or part of the day. It is recommended that consideration for placement in general education classrooms follow the four-factor test delineated by the Ninth Circuit Court in *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel H* (1994). Placement in less restrictive environments is not a privilege contingent upon attainment of a certain level within the level system.

Level systems offer teachers the opportunity to develop a behavioral curriculum in combination with a differential reinforcement system. This combination can result in an effective behavior management system. However, many level systems have been "prepackaged" and applied across students with no regard for individualized programming. Some of the current practices in regard to level systems may violate students' rights to individualized programming and may not serve students' best interests. In this section, we have highlighted some of the dangers associated with requiring students to earn what is their right and to work within a system not tailored to their individual needs. A decision-making model has been presented to assist IEP teams in developing effective and legal level systems. Decisions concerning level systems should be given serious consideration and should result in an appropriate individualized educational program for the student.

The Garrison Model: An Effective Program for Managing the Behaviors of Adolescents with Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders

One program for adolescents with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) that incorporates the principles discussed in this monograph is the Garrison Model, a therapeutic program emphasizing a student's responsibility for the choices that he or she makes. The model was developed at the Garrison School, a public alternative day school that serves students identified as having severe behavioral disorders. The school is a part of the Four Rivers Special Education District in Illinois and was founded in 1981. The key components of the school, along with the emphasis on student responsibility for actions, include

- The whole-school approach.
- Direct social-skills training.
- Positive involvement in the community through community service learning.
- Elimination of suspension coupled with the development of logical and natural consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- Interagency coordination.
- Safe-school planning.
- Gang identification, intervention, and prevention.
- Creation of a positive environment.
- Positive acknowledgment of student success.
- Violence intervention through the team approach.
- Development of good community public relations.
- Accentuation of the positive.
- Parent involvement.

A description of some of these key elements follows.

The Whole-School Approach

The Garrison Model, developed by the faculty and staff of the Garrison School, emphasizes teacher/staff empowerment, an underlying force in the model's success. All personnel are directly involved in formulating annual program goals and developing plans for meeting those goals. By involving the entire staff, the program has maintained a cohesive approach. Each staff member sets a personal goal for the following year. Posting the goals increases the likelihood that goals will be met, and the entire goal-setting process keeps faculty and staff focused, unified, and purposeful in the education and treatment of the students.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the whole-school approach is the development of whole-school expectations and the specification of which behavior constitutes major infractions. This facilitates a unified staff approach to students. Because students are aware that all staff work together and share common goals for the school, they realize that they cannot pit staff members against each other or easily manipulate staff.

Social Skills Training

The Garrison Model advocates the direct teaching of social skills. Each teacher at Garrison holds daily class meetings with the students designed to facilitate social skills training (Johns & Carr, 1995). Also, a faculty committee establishes a social skill theme for each month. Various activities for *staff and students* center on this common "whole-school social skill monthly theme."

Community Service Learning

All students at the Garrison School participate in community service learning. The purpose of this curriculum component is to provide opportunities for students to realize that they can provide assistance to others and can be a valuable part of their community. A secondary reason for this component is to show the community the potential of the students.

Each class selects its own community service project and develops a schedule for involvement. Staff participate along with students and classes go as a group to their sites. Staff members "role-model" specific skills and participate in the community service alongside the students. If problems arise, a class meeting is called to work out solutions or to engage in or practice appropriate social skills. Evaluative data suggest that some

students improve their attendance due to their involvement in community service; some improve their hygiene by dressing up to "go out to their job"; and others feel needed and wanted, some for the first time. Some Garrison students have been offered jobs as a result of community service. And one student, heavily gang involved, who worked with young children at a local day care had a child cry when she left to return to school. On the way back the Garrison student repeated over and over that no one had ever cried before simply because she was leaving.

Elimination of Suspension and Implementation of Responsibility-Based Discipline

For many students, suspension is a highly rewarding consequence that has been the motivation behind some of their inappropriate behavior in other settings. Garrison School does not suspend students for any reason. The students are told, upon entering, that there are no behaviors that will get them suspended from school. A student who hits someone will have charges for battery pressed with the local police yet afterward return to school. However, all students know about the logical and natural consequences of their actions that are built into the program. The constant theme at Garrison is "It's your choice. Make a good decision for yourself." To reinforce this motto and guiding principle, a detailed Behavior Management Plan incorporating principles from responsibility-based discipline is attached to the IEP, and each plan item is discussed with parents and the students. Responsibility-based discipline places consequences on the students making them responsible for their actions.

Conflict resolution is a key element in the Garrison program. Simply put, conflict resolution is the process of two students working out the solution to "their" problem with a mediator. Following the same process as conflict resolution, a school-based Climate Committee is used whenever a problem behavior continues even after all other means of intervention have been used. Parents and the student as well as the party who has the concern meet with the Climate Committee and share their respective views of the problem. The committee consists of volunteer staff and parents who hear the concern and assist in seeking an acceptable resolution by offering consequences or alternative interventions. The Garrison process has been used by teachers and bus drivers as well as by students and parents. And conflict resolution strategies are growing in popularity across the country.

Interagency Coordination

Developing an interagency coordinating council increases a faculty's ability to provide services and coordinate efforts for students. The Garrison coordinating council consists of representatives from all agencies and organizations involved with students. The council's cooperative, professional efforts have resulted in a communication network, establishment of a truancy task force, and open communication between police and the school regarding program guidelines and governing policies. The improvement in the communication and working relationship between the agencies has led to improved response to student needs.

Gang Identification and Prevention

In efforts to prevent gang activity from entering the school, Garrison faculty have taken a "no tolerance" approach. Faculty are adamant in the belief that students should be in school but will tolerate no gang activity. Again, no student is suspended for gang activity, but there are set consequences for such behavior. Through the dress code, Garrison staff spell out the consequences for inappropriate attire. Through the major infraction list, faculty address gang-related drawings, gestures, statements, and comments. All students, upon entering, are informed that the school communicates periodically with the police and shares any gang-related information from students. By addressing any incident of gang activity directly and immediately, staff have been able to suppress this activity in the school but recognize the need to remain constantly vigilant.

Climate and Environment Issues

The Garrison School staff believe that the physical appearance of the school represents an important element in providing a sense of belonging for children and a family-type setting. Real and artificial plants are located in the halls and classrooms; bulletin boards are decorated, and newspaper clippings regarding the students or staff are framed and hung in the halls. In short, the building looks like an upscale "regular school." Each class and all staff members are also given a "school job" on a monthly basis. The school's positive appearance sends a message that the students are valued and respected.

The development of a student council has also contributed to a positive school climate. The council is comprised of one student per classroom and meets on a monthly basis to discuss and make recommendations on

issues regarding school purchases from fund raiser monies, school procedures, and school needs. The council also plans all special events.

Violence Prevention

The first step in a violence-prevention program is the use of timeout (discussed earlier in this monograph) for students showing signs of frustration and escalation of aggressive behaviors. At the same time, students are expected to learn ways in which they can control their impulses. Many need to do this in an area away from others. The Garrison School has two timeout rooms in which students can take a few minutes to get calm, think through a situation, and then return to class.

The second component of violence prevention/intervention is the use of a team approach to students who engage in aggressive behavior. The Garrison School faculty believe that all schools should have a team consisting of 4 to 8 members who are appropriately trained in safe physical intervention. The team should respond when a student is a danger to self or others or is so disruptive that the teacher cannot continue to teach. Like many other schools, the Garrison staff have developed various training techniques and methods of respectful and safe physical intervention. Any such school team needs training in physical intervention techniques and should operate according to policies and procedures established before implementation into a school setting.

Perhaps the most important aspect of having a "safe-school team" is the school-wide attitude presented to the students: "In this school, we do not tolerate aggression. There is a plan to deal with aggressive and violent situations swiftly, calmly, respectfully, and with skilled staff." Students who, in the past, gained attention through aggression generally find that with the team in place those benefits no longer exist. The mere presence of a safe-school team has been a positive factor in reducing violence at Garrison.

Developing Positive Public Relations

Garrison faculty have found that developing positive public relations is essential to promoting the positive aspects of the school, the model, and the students themselves. This began with contacts with the local newspaper. The newspaper began to recognize Garrison as a viable member of the community and a feature article on the school was one result. Other positive results have continued to enhance the visibility and reputation of the school.

Developing positive relationships with the business community has been a goal for the past few years. The Garrison School joined the Chamber of Commerce recently and is an active part of the education committee. To keep parents, staff, and the community aware of our school, the *Garrison Newsletter* was developed in which teachers and staff have the opportunity to highlight special students and activities.

Accenting the Positive

The following are a few ways to bring recognition to students for demonstrating appropriate behavior: Weekly Honor Roll; Monthly Perfect Attendance Pizza Party; End of Year Perfect Attendance Monetary Award; Student of the Week; Class of the Month; Good Citizen Award; school store with "money" based on good behavior; and Quarterly Award Assemblies recognizing academics, behaviors, and community service involvement.

Parent Involvement

Parents are also an important part of the Garrison Model. Opportunities are provided for parent input through the Parent Advisory Council and Support Group. Parent visitation opportunities are provided through Open House and Parent Visitation Day. Parents are kept informed of happenings and good news through the *Garrison Newsletter* which works to highlight the positive accomplishments of the students and school. Parents are always welcome in the school.

In sum, the Garrison Model represents a comprehensive approach to the education and treatment of adolescents with E/BD. The program stresses student-responsibility-based interventions that improve appropriate behaviors and academic achievement. While the model was developed for students with severe behavioral needs, it can be adapted to almost any school situation. For example, the Garrison Model has been successfully implemented in regular education elementary schools and high schools. As the model is implemented in a variety of settings, it can become a preventive measure for reducing violence and aggression not only with students with behavioral disorders but also within the whole domain of public schools.

Conclusion

The 1990 publication titled *At the Schoolhouse Door* documented the results of a series of visits to exemplary programs across the country serving students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD). Two findings from this study are especially noteworthy. First, the authors found numerous examples of what they referred to as "curriculum bleakness" in many of these specialized settings. As described by Steinberg (1991):

> At its best, learning is a passionate involvement with an idea, a desire to grapple and to know. At its most mundane, it's the acquisition of skills to accomplish the tasks at hand. What we saw sometimes approached the acquisition of skills, but hardly ever engaged the hearts and minds of teachers and students. (p. 7)

A second element observed in these visits was an overreliance on what the authors referred to as the "curriculum of control." Steinberg (1991) describes how such an approach leads to a priority of the teacher maintaining control rather than helping the students gain control themselves. She states:

> While control is a central issue for all schools, and indeed every teacher needs to feel confident about managing the class, in the classrooms that we observed it seemed too often forgotten that classroom order is a *means* to an educationally sound environment and *not an end* in itself. (p. 9)

By following the concepts in this monograph, educators can engage the hearts and minds of their students and help them to gain control over their own behavior. In so doing, educators will improve substantially the quality of programming for students with E/BD.

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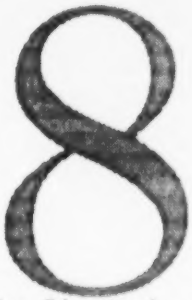

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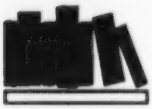

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